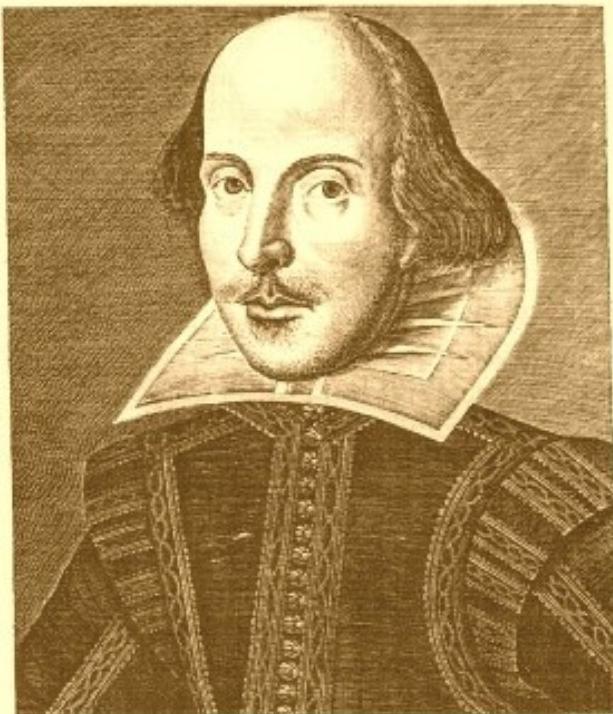


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to Modern English - for contemporary
readers and performers

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Shakespeare For White Trash: The Taming of the Shrew

Classic literature translated into Modern English by Crad Kilodney

October 7, 2010 – Author’s Note:

“Shakespeare For White Trash” is a series of condensed rewrites designed to make Shakespeare understandable and enjoyable to those who have little or no knowledge of him. The plots and characters are unchanged, but everything else has been radically restyled. Read my versions and you’ll be a Shakespeare fan forever!

These plays are intended to be performed, as well as read.

Main Characters

Baptista Minola — gentleman of Padua

Katherina — his older daughter (the “shrew”)

Bianca — his younger daughter

Hortensio — suitor to Bianca

Gremio — suitor to Bianca

Vincentio — gentleman of Pisa

Lucentio — son of Vincentio, and in love with Bianca

Biondello and Tranio — servants of Lucentio

Petruchio — gentleman of Verona, and suitor to Katherina

Grumio and Curtis — servants of Petruchio

Cauchemar — servant of Baptista (the name appears only in this version of the play)

Pedant (scholar)

The Widow — later marries Hortensio

Tailor

Haberdasher

Dr. Kwambe Odopongo Bungalunga — a scientist (appears only in this version of the play)

Gist of the story: Baptista, a rich gentleman of Padua, has two daughters — Katherina and Bianca. Katherina, the older daughter, is regarded as a “shrew” because of her nasty disposition. Bianca, on the other hand, is sweet and likable, and she has suitors. But Baptista has decided that Katherina must be married first, and until then no one can court Bianca. Bianca’s suitors look for someone to marry Katherina. When Petruchio, a friend of Hortensio, arrives in Padua, he learns about Katherina and her shrewish reputation, and he decides to court her, marry her, and tame her. A series of complex deceptions takes place. Hortensio, knowing that Baptista is looking for tutors for his daughters, disguises himself as the tutor Litio, and has Petruchio present him to Baptista. Lucentio has his servant Tranio assume his identity, while Lucentio changes himself into the tutor Cambio. Gremio presents Cambio to Baptista to gain his goodwill, not knowing that Cambio is really Lucentio, who wants to court Bianca. Tranio, pretending to be Lucentio, makes an extremely large offer of a dowry for Bianca’s hand to compete against Gremio. Baptista accepts Tranio’s offer provisionally. Now Tranio has to find an impostor to play the role of Lucentio’s father, Vincentio, to back up Tranio’s extravagant promises of wealth. The deception comes unraveled when the real Vincentio shows up and confronts the impostor. All ends well, however. Lucentio gets the girl (Bianca), and Petruchio has married Katherina and transformed her into a perfectly obedient wife. (Shakespeare’s original play begins with a gimmicky “Induction,” which has nothing to do with the play itself, and it is routinely cut out of performances. I decided to concoct my own “Introduction,” which is a rip-off of a 1959 monster movie trailer. My alleged scientist, Dr. Kwambe Odopongo Bungalunga, also appears at the very end to give the play a suitably gimmicky conclusion.)

Introduction. *A very pale-skinned man in a light-coloured suit faces the audience. Beside him is a small table with a small animal cage containing several toy mice. He speaks with an authoritative, scholarly voice. (The player must be Caucasian and speak without any accent.)*

Dr. Bungalunga: Hello. I am Dr. Kwambe Odopongo Bungalunga of the National Post-Colonial University of Smartness. Our thanks to this theatre for making this time available to us. Perhaps some of you have wondered, what is the world’s most vicious animal? The lion? The tiger? The rhino? No. The most vicious animal in the world is a tiny one—no larger than that (*Indicates with fingers spread*). The killer shrew. I’m going to show you some of them. (*He picks up the cage. The audience can’t see the toy mice clearly anyway.*) They look like mice, don’t they? But they aren’t! These little fiends must eat three times their own body weight every day, or they starve to death. They attack every living creature, regardless of size—including human beings. And they consume everything—bones, flesh, marrow—everything. And the blarina shrew—deadly poison. Shrews like these have been known to attack a pack of wolves and devour them without a trace. You can understand our concern for public safety when I tell you that there have been recent sightings of giant killer shrews in Alaska. We urge that you report to your local authorities at once—any sighting of a giant killer shrew.

(Curtain)

Act 1, Scene 1. *A street in Padua. Lucentio and his servant, Tranio, come in.*

Lucentio: Well, here we are in Padua! It's a great college town. Their football stadium is called the Fruit Bowl because this part of Italy has lots of fruit. In fact, Lombardy is regarded as the garden of Italy.

Tranio: Maybe we can score some good weed.

Lucentio: No, no. My father wouldn't approve of that. He sent me here to get a good education. I intend to study philosophy. I believe that the way to be happy is to find wisdom and lead a moral life.

Tranio: Yeah, that's okay—but I like to get stoned occasionally.

Lucentio: I expect you to study philosophy as well. It'll do you good. There's no reason why a servant shouldn't be well-read.

Tranio: I don't mind reading a book now and then. But just don't turn into a typical academic dickhead. University faculties are full of stiffness—like that miserable son of a bitch (*Faces the audience and speaks loudly*) Sam Solecki, of the University of Toronto! (*To Tranio in a normal voice*) Don't force yourself to read a lot of thick, boring books just because all the eggheads read them. Read what you like. I like Crad Kildney.

Lucentio: I think you're right about that. You know, for a servant, you're pretty smart.

Tranio: Thank you. I shall endeavor to demonstrate my perspicacity whenever called upon.

Lucentio: When Biondello shows up, we'll rent a house. I expect we'll make friends here. We'll socialize. It'll be good.

Tranio: Whoa!—I see hot-looking babes. And some old farts. Let's see what this is about.

(Tranio draws Lucentio apart. Concealment may be suggested. Baptista comes in with his daughters, Katherina and Bianca; also Bianca's suitors, Gremio and Hortensio, who are old and unappealing.)

Baptista: I've told you fellows already. Nobody gets to marry Bianca, or even court her, until I find a husband for Katherina. After all, she's older, and she should be married first. Now, if either of you were perhaps willing to marry her—

Gremio: No, thanks. She's a killer shrew.

Hortensio: Ha! That's telling it like it is, Gremio!

Kate: I wouldn't have either one of you trolls—except maybe as a lawn ornament.

Hortensio: Baptista, my friend, by the time you find a man who will tolerate this girl of yours, I'll be dead of old age.

Gremio: Me, too.

Tranio (Aside to Lucentio): Get a load of that. That woman is either a lunatic or some kind of warrior queen.

Lucentio (Aside to Tranio): I like the other one—Bianca.

Baptista: Look, you fellows just have to bear with me.—Bianca, go inside like a good girl, all right?

Kate (Sarcastically): Yes, Bianca, be obedient and do as you're told.

(*Bianca gives her a sour look.*)

Bianca: I'll do whatever you say, father. I don't mind being all alone in my little room. I can read my books and play my flute.

(*Bianca leaves.*)

Lucentio (Aside to Tranio): Oh! She's a cultured girl. I like that.

Hortensio: Baptista, you're being unfair to Bianca.

Gremio: Yes. She could marry one of us immediately. Why should she have to suffer just because her sister is so hostile to men?

(*Katherina sticks out her tongue at Gremio.*)

Baptista: Look, there's no use trying to debate with me about it. And believe me, I care very much about Bianca's happiness. In fact, I was thinking of hiring a tutor for her—someone who can teach her music and literature. If you think of anyone suitable, let me know. I'll pay them well—and you'll earn my appreciation, too.—Now, I really have to go.—Kate, you can stay out if you like.

(*Baptista leaves.*)

Kate (Sarcastically): Oh! I'm such a big girl I can stay out! Maybe that means I have a brain.—Oh, but I don't. I'm so-o-o stupid I don't know whether to stay or go.

(*She leaves.*)

Gremio: What a bitch! Who would marry her?

Hortensio: I don't know.

Gremio: Well—anyway—Maybe I can find a tutor. That should earn me a bit of goodwill, at least.

Hortensio: That's what I intend to do.—You know, even though we're competing for Bianca, neither one of us will have a chance unless we can find some poor sucker to marry the shrew.

Gremio: Impossible. Even with all her father's money.

Hortensio: Well, now, you can't say that. There could be someone out there. He might consider it a challenge.

Gremio: Good luck finding him.

Hortensio: If I find him first, then I'm first in line to marry Bianca. If you find him first, then you are. Does that sound fair to you?

Gremio (Considering): Okay, Hortensio. I'll agree to that.

(Gremio and Hortensio leave. Lucentio is in a daze.)

Tranio: What do you think of that?—Hey—Lucentio.

Lucentio (Still dazed): I want that girl—Bianca. She's the one I've been waiting for all my life.

Tranio: I think I see an arrow sticking out of your heart. We just got to Padua, you know. There'll be lots of girls to meet. You want to fall for some girl just like that and get married?

Lucentio: I want her. *Tranio,* think of something. Help me.

Tranio: Okay, boss. It's a good thing I have an analytical mind.

Lucentio: Yes. You do.

Tranio: Okay, well, the problem is very clear. Bianca's on ice until the shrew sister gets married off. Now, I don't think Bianca would be too keen on either of the old farts, but she'd probably go for you—assuming you could get close to her. But her father's keeping her in the house, away from any suitors. So you've got to get your foot in the door another way.

Lucentio: Okay, but how?

Tranio: The old man is looking for a tutor, right?

Lucentio: Right.

Tranio: So you'll be a tutor. You'll change your identity.

Lucentio: Brilliant!

Tranio: There's just one hitch.

Lucentio: What's that?

Tranio: If you're going to be someone else, who's going to be you? If one of us rents a house in the name of Lucentio, there has to be a Lucentio living there—a gentleman from Pisa. The son of Vincentio. You're supposed to be studying at the university. You have to entertain visitors. If they're familiar with Pisa, you have to know Pisa, too.

Lucentio: Wait a minute—wait a minute—So far, nobody in Padua has met either one of us, right?

Tranio: Right.

Lucentio: So you'll be me!

Tranio: I'll be you?

Lucentio: Yes. You'll be the master. You'll be Lucentio. You'll rent the house and take care of all the social obligations. I'll be just—I don't know—some ordinary person—from anywhere. Doesn't matter.—Quick! Let's change clothes! (*The two begin to undress and change clothes.*) When Biondello arrives, he'll be your servant. I'll make up some bullshit story so he'll keep everything secret.

Tranio: I always imagined being the master, heh, heh—no offense.

Lucentio: That's fine. It'll help you play the role better.—Here comes Biondello now.

(*Biondello comes in.*)

Biondello: What the hell? How come you're wearing each other's clothes?

Lucentio: Listen, Biondello, you've got to help me. You've got to keep this a secret.

Biondello: Keep what a secret?

Lucentio: Um—I got into a fight with one of the locals, and I killed him. I think there were witnesses. Tranio is assuming my identity so I can get away. You've got to act as his servant, understand?

Biondello: No.

Lucentio: Tranio is now me. He's Lucentio. That's what you have to call him in front of other people.

Tranio (Smiling): Yes. I'm your master now, Biondello.

Lucentio: Come on, let's go.—Tranio, you have to meet the old dudes. I've got a plan.

Biondello: Wait a minute. I thought you had to leave town.

Lucentio: Um—conceptually, yes.

Biondello: Conceptually? What the hell does that mean? You said you killed someone.

Lucentio: Um—right—yeah.

Biondello: Who'd you kill?

Lucentio: Um—it was, uh—uh—

Tranio: A shopkeeper, wasn't it?

Lucentio: Yeah, that's it. A shopkeeper.

Biondello: What kind of shop did he have?

Lucentio: What kind of shop? (*He looks at Tranio for help, and the two of them speak simultaneously.*)

Tranio: Pet shop.

Lucentio: Clothing.

(*Tranio and Lucentio try to correct themselves but speak simultaneously again.*)

Tranio: Clothing.

Lucentio: Pet shop.

Biondello: Make up your minds.

Tranio: It was, uh—clothing for pets.

Biondello: Clothing for pets. (*He gives them a broad smirk of skepticism and turns to the audience to share it with them. When Biondello is in profile to Tranio, Tranio tugs his collar and whispers in his ear for a good ten seconds, inaudibly to the audience.*) Oh! So that's it!—You could've told me outright.

Lucentio (Impatiently): Come on, let's go!

(They all leave.)

Act 1, Scene 2. *Petruchio, a young gentleman of Verona, has arrived in Padua with his servant, Grumio, who is an older man. They are before the house of Hortensio.*

Petruchio: It's good to get away from Verona. I haven't seen my friends here in Padua for too long—especially Hortensio. This is his house.

Grumio: Oh. This is his house, eh? Then he must live in it.—Mmm.

Petruchio: Don't just stand there, Grumio. You're my servant. Knock.

Grumio: Knock? Do you mean—knock someone out?

Petruchio: No, stupid. Knock here!

Grumio: Where—specifically?

Petruchio: Am I not making myself clear? Knock in my behalf.

Grumio: You want me to knock in—your behalf?

Petruchio: Yes.

Grumio: That's a very strange request, sir. Are you going to bend over and have me knock you in your behalf?

Petruchio: Idiot! Certainly not!

Grumio: So then you're cancelling your previous order, is that it?

Petruchio: No! I still want you to knock in my behalf. And do it loud enough to make sure it's heard in the house.

Grumio: Shall I give you a kick, then—in your behalf?

Petruchio: Not unless you want to be out of a job!

Grumio: Well, now I am confused, sir. Shall I knock you before we go in?

Petruchio: Of course! How else do you expect us to get in?

Grumio: Is this a local custom of some sort?

Petruchio: Never mind! Just ring the bell!

Grumio: Oh, yes, I can do that. (*He pulls the handle for the doorbell.*) Then are we to forget about my knocking you in your behalf?

Petruchio: That won't be necessary now—obviously.

Grumio: Well, that's a relief.

(*Hortensio appears at the door.*)

Hortensio: Well! Well! Look who's here! Petruchio—and good, old Grumio! How are you?

Petruchio: I'm quite well, thank you. But this nitwit didn't know enough to knock on your door.

Grumio: Knock on the door? That isn't what you told me to do. (*To Hortensio*) He wanted me to give him a knock—in his behalf! (*He indicates his own ass.*)

Petruchio: Ach! You idiot!

Hortensio: It's all right. Just a simple misunderstanding.—So what brings you all the way from Verona?

Petruchio: Well, my father, Antonio, passed away, and—I think it's about time I struck out on my own. You know—travel a bit. Maybe find a wife. I have a bit of money now, and the property in Verona. But, of course, I'd like to be richer.

Hortensio: Looking for a wife, are you?

Petruchio: Yes.

Hortensio: It so happens I know an available lady. Her father's rich, but she's awfully bad-tempered. I don't think you'd like her.

Petruchio: If she's rich, I'm interested. And I don't care if she's as ugly as a gorgon or if she has the personality of a polecat.

Grumio: All the way from Verona he was going on about finding a rich woman to marry. He'd marry Frankenstein's daughter if she was rich enough.

Hortensio: Oh, the one I'm thinking of is no monster. She's quite beautiful. But—she's a killer shrew. I wouldn't marry her if she owned all the gold mines in Europe.

Petruchio: A killer shrew? Huh! Sounds like an interesting challenge. If she's rich, I want to meet her. Who is she?

Hortensio: Her name is Katherina. She's the daughter of a friend of mine—Baptista Minola. A merchant. Very respectable.

Petruchio: Oh, yes. My father knew him. How about taking me over and introducing me?

Grumio (To Hortensio): You should do it, Hortensio. He's probably the only man in the world who could handle a killer shrew.

Hortensio (To Petruchio): Sure, I'll take you over there. It so happens I want to marry his younger daughter, Bianca. But he's not allowing anyone to court her until he marries off Katherina first.

Petruchio: Ah! So if I marry the killer shrew, you get to marry her sister.

Hortensio: Well, she has another suitor, but at least I'd have a chance to marry her.—Hmm. (*He ponders.*) Would you do me a favour?

Petruchio: Of course. Anything for a friend.

Hortensio: The only way I can get close to Bianca is to disguise myself. Her father is looking for a tutor for her. So I'll be a tutor—a music tutor. You'll take me over there and present me to Baptista, and you can meet his other daughter, Katherina.

Petruchio: Sure thing.

Grumio: Very clever!—Oh—who's that?

(*Gremio approaches with Lucentio, now disguised as the tutor Cambio, who is carrying books. Petruchio, Hortensio, and Grumio stand apart to eavesdrop. Some sort of concealment would be suggested.*)

Hortensio (Aside to Petruchio and Grumio): See that old guy? That's Gremio. He's my rival. He also wants to marry Bianca.

Gremio (To Lucentio): Okay, now, I told you what you have to do. You've got to get her interested in romantic novels—you know, get her in the mood. Understand?

Lucentio: Yes, yes.

Gremio: And every once in a while, you drop my name. You tell her what a fine man I am, very noble, you know—just like a character in one of those books, get it?

Lucentio: Yes, yes.

Gremio: You're sorta pimping for me, you understand.

Lucentio: Right.

Gremio: But, of course, you're a tutor, so you have to speak well and be convincing.

Lucentio: Yes, yes.

Gremio: If you help me land Bianca, there'll be a big bonus in it for you—over and above what Baptista will pay you for being a tutor.

Lucentio: You can count on me. I'll pitch you to Bianca even better than you could yourself. I've got a way with words.

Gremio: Thank God for higher education! You're a good man, Cambio.

(At this point, Hortensio steps forward, pretending to be meeting Gremio by coincidence.)

Hortensio: Oh! Gremio! How nice to see you. Wassup?

Gremio: Oh, hi, Hortensio. Guess what? I found a tutor for Bianca.—This is Cambio.—Cambio, this is my friend Hortensio.

Lucentio: How do you do, sir.

Hortensio: How do you do, Cambio.

Gremio: We're on our way to Baptista's house now.

Hortensio: Ah, that's nice. Baptista will be very pleased, I'm sure. It so happens that I've lined up a tutor for Bianca, too.

Gremio: Oh, really?

Hortensio: Yes. I met a gentleman who knows an available tutor of music.

Gremio: Oh, that's nice. Baptista will be happy about that. But I have no doubt that Bianca will choose me. I love her more than you do, and she'll soon realize it.

Hortensio: Yeah, yeah. Words, words.—But I've got some real news! *(He beckons to Petruchio to join them.)* This gentleman's name is Petruchio. And—he'll marry the killer shrew if there's enough money in it for him.

Gremio: No shit! *(To Petruchio)* Do you have any idea what you're getting yourself into?

Petruchio (Laughing): I've been told all about Katherina, the killer shrew. Doesn't faze me a bit. I can handle her.

Gremio: Can you, now? And what planet are you from?

Petruchio: I'm from Verona. My father was Antonio. He passed away and left me his estate. But I intend to become a lot richer while I'm still young.

Gremio: Well, I sure hope you do. And it would certainly be good for me if you married Katherina.

Hortensio: And for me, too.

Gremio: But I can't imagine how you expect to win her over. She's quite a terror.

Petruchio: Oh, hell, I've been through worse ordeals in my life. I've been in wars, I've wrestled with alligators, I've camped on the slopes of active volcanoes, I've been through hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, plagues of locusts, I've fought bears and lions, I've climbed Mt. Everest in the winter, I've been stabbed by assassins—Hell, I've even stood in line at the Toronto-Dominion Bank on a Monday.

Grumio (Aside to the audience): Now, that takes guts.

Gremio: Well, Hortensio, I think this is a good piece of luck for both of us.

Hortensio: Yes. And I promised him we'd cooperate with him so he can marry Katherina.

Gremio: Of course, we will.

(Now Tranio comes in, disguised as Lucentio, and servant Biondello is right behind him.)

Tranio: Good afternoon, gentlemen.

Others: Good afternoon.

Tranio: Can any of you tell me the way to Baptista Minola's house?

Gremio: You want to see Baptista, do you? Or perhaps you want to see one of his daughters.

Tranio: I didn't say—did I?

Gremio: Who are you, if I may ask?

Tranio: My name is Lucentio. Who are you?

Gremio: I'm Gremio—And this is Hortensio—and this is—

Petruchio: Petruchio.

Gremio: Yes. Petruchio.—And this gentleman is Cambio.—Now, sir, I shall ask you directly. Are you here to court one of Baptista's daughters?

Tranio: What's it to you?

Petruchio: You're not interested in the older one, I hope—the one they call the killer shrew.

Tranio: Killer shrew? Oh, my God! I don't want any killer shrew!

Hortensio: What about the other one—Bianca? (*He waits for Tranio to reply, but Tranio remains silent.*) Because I'm going to marry Bianca.

Gremio: Correction. I'm going to marry Bianca.

Hortensio: Well, either way, she's unavailable. In fact, they're both unavailable. So why don't you just take a hike—Signor Lucentio?

Tranio: Hey, just wait a minute. First of all, I can visit Baptista if I want to. He's a friend of my father. And second, I believe Bianca can have as many suitors as she wants, and maybe that includes me. There's no law that sets a limit.

Gremio: I don't need any more competition.

Hortensio: Neither do I

Petruchio: Whoa! Are there three of you after the same girl?

Hortensio (To Tranio): You haven't even seen Baptista's daughters.

Tranio: All right, I haven't. All I know is, he has two. One's a bitch, and the other one's an angel.

Petruchio: I get the bitch.

Tranio: You really want her?

Petruchio: I like a challenge. And just so you understand the situation, the old man isn't letting anyone court Bianca until the killer shrew—that's Katherina—gets married first.

Tranio: Ah, so then we all need you, don't we?

Hortensio: Yes. And that means showing this gentleman some generosity, as well as cooperation. Signior Gremio and I have already agreed to that.

Tranio: Oh, well! Count me in, by all means. I wouldn't shame myself by being a cheapskate. In fact—why don't we go find a nice pub somewhere and sit down and have a few drinks and be friendly with each other. My treat.

Biondello: Servants included?

Tranio: Of course.

Grumio: Far out!

Hortensio: I know just the place—Angry Bob's. They have really hot serving babes. My treat.

Gremio: No, I'm buying.

Hortensio: No, I'm buying.

(They all leave, continuing to argue about who's buying.)

Act 2, Scene 1. *In Baptista's house. A knock is heard. Baptista crosses the stage to open the door, and then leads in the following people, who are paired up: Gremio is with Lucentio (disguised as Cambio); Petruchio is with Hortensio (disguised as Litio); Tranio (disguised as Lucentio) is with Biondello, who has a lot of books and a lute. (Gremio doesn't know that Cambio is Lucentio.)*

Gremio: Good morning, Baptista.

Baptista: Good morning, Gremio.—Well, well! If this is a convention, my appointment secretary forgot to tell me about it—ha, ha.

Gremio: No, no. You're simply the most popular man in town—ha, ha.

Baptista: Oh, lucky me!

Gremio: This gentleman is Petruchio. He wanted to meet you.

Baptista: How do you do, sir. Welcome.

Petruchio: Thank you. I've come all the way from Verona, sir. You see, I've heard that you have a very fine daughter—a very sweet, friendly, good-natured lady, quite beautiful, also intelligent, although perhaps a bit shy and modest.

Baptista: Um—yes—I would say she is all of those things.

Petruchio: And her name is Katherina.

(Baptista is momentarily shocked [perhaps he coughs] and then recovers himself.)

Baptista: Oh!—Oh!—Yes—Katherina—I thought—uh—yes—Of course!

Petruchio: I had to meet her in person to see for myself if she's everything I've heard. And to thank you in advance for your hospitality, I've brought you this man. (*He presents Hortensio.*) His name is Litio. He's a tutor in music and mathematics. I heard that you were seeking a tutor.

Baptista: Yes. Indeed. Well, that's fine. I'm certainly happy to have a tutor who knows music and mathematics—for my daughters, of course.—Um—but I must tell you, Signior Petruchio, that my daughter Katherina—although she has many good qualities—is perhaps not exactly the sort of lady that you believe she is.

Petruchio: Oh. Perhaps you don't want to marry her off. Or perhaps you think I'm not suitable.

Baptista: Oh, no, no, no. It's not that.—Um—You come from Verona, did you say?

Petruchio: Yes. I believe you knew my father—Antonio. Everyone knew him. He passed away, as you may have heard.

Baptista: Oh, yes, yes! Antonio. I'm very sorry.—Well, if you're his son, you're certainly welcome here.

Gremio: Hey, Petruchio, do you mind? Can I get a word in edgewise?

Petruchio: I'm not finished.

Gremio: Hey, take a time-out. (*To Baptista*) I've also brought someone you'll definitely be happy to meet. (*He presents Lucentio.*) This fine fellow is Cambio. He spent many years studying in France. He also knows music and math—and in addition—he knows Greek, Latin, and other languages as well. You may have him as a tutor.

Baptista (Laughing): My goodness! We'll be opening our own university here soon, won't we? (*To Tranio*) I don't believe I know you, sir.

Tranio: My name is Lucentio. I am from Pisa. I believe you know my father—Vincentio.

Baptista: Oh, yes—well, at least I know him by reputation. I'm very glad to meet you.

Tranio: Thank you. To come straight to the point, sir, I've come to court your daughter Bianca.

Baptista: You're not the only one.

Tranio: So I've been told. It's quite all right. And I've been told that you insist on marrying off your older daughter, Katherina, first.

Baptista: Yes, that's right.

Tranio: Sir, for the benefit and enjoyment of both your daughters, I've brought you this fine lute and these fine books in Greek and Latin.

Baptista: How very thoughtful. Thank you. (*To Hortensio*) Why don't you take this lute, Litio. I'm sure you know how to play it. (*Litio takes the lute from Tranio. To Lucentio*) And you, sir—

Lucentio: Cambio, sir.

Baptista: Yes—Cambio—You can take charge of these books. (*Lucentio takes most of the books from Biondello.*) Well, I suppose you fellows will want to meet your students.—Cauchemar! (*Calls to a Servant, who comes in quickly.*) Take these gentlemen to my daughters. They're tutors. (*The servant leads out Hortensio, Lucentio, and Biondello. Biondello's departure is explained by the fact that he is carrying some of the books.*) Well, gentlemen, shall we go out to the garden and get some fresh air?

Petruchio: I don't really need any fresh air, sir. Actually, I'm kind of in a hurry to get this business—you know—moving. (*He makes a strange, ambiguous gesture with his hands that looks vaguely obscene. This should be a slow gesture. Something original is called for—something that Ed Norton might have done on “The Honeymooners”.*)

Baptista: Moving? How do you mean?

Petruchio: You know—move it on out. (*He repeats the gesture.*)

Baptista: Move it—what?

Petruchio: Just mo-o-o-ove it—slow—but fast—Mo-o-o-ove it on. (*More gesturing, but even more elaborate.*)

Baptista: Moo?

Petruchio: Just mo-o-o-ove it on down the line. (*More gesturing*) Just—let it happen—but (*More gesturing*) help it along—with—alacrity!

Baptista (Confused): You mean (*He tries to duplicate the gesture*) move it—like this?

Petruchio: You're getting the hang of it.

Baptista (To the audience): Is this what they teach in Theatre Arts these days?

Petruchio: So, getting back to business. I inherited my father's estate, so it's not like I'm here as a beggar. I'm very good with money, in fact. And, of course, whatever dowry you're offering with Katherina, it'll be treated the way money is supposed to be treated—you know—with respect.—So, how much do you intend to give her?

Baptista: After I die, she gets half of everything. And when she gets married, her husband gets ten thousand.

Petruchio: That's fine. I'll guarantee her that much if I die before her. So, I'm ready to sign a contract if you are.

Baptista: All in good time. You have to win her over first. After all, you haven't met each other yet.

Petruchio: I'll win her over, no problem. If she is a moth, then I am a flame. She is drawn to the flame. She singes her wings and can't fly. Then the wind blows, and the flame goes out, but she's stuck in the wax. Or if the wind doesn't blow, then the flame burns hotter, and the house catches fire and burns down—but our eternal love glows in the embers, and our spirits go up with the smoke to Valhalla.

Baptista (To the audience): What the fuck is this guy talking about?

(Hortensio returns, walking slowly, grimacing in pain, with a hand on his head.)

Baptista: What happened to you?

Hortensio: I was giving Katherina a lesson on the lute, and when I tried to correct her technique, she smashed me on the head with it.

Petruchio: Wow! I love her already!

Baptista (To Hortensio): Oh, I'm terribly sorry, Signior Litio. Why don't you try giving a lesson to Bianca? I'm sure she won't hit you.

Hortensio: The strings are all messed up. I'd have to retune them.

Baptista: Well, give her a math lesson, then. She's very keen on algebra.

Hortensio: Algebra—Yes—All right. That should be safe enough.

Baptista: I'll go with you.—Petruchio, do you want to come and meet Kate, or shall I send her out to meet you?

Petruchio: Send her out. I'll wait here.

Baptista: All right.

(Everyone leaves except Petruchio.)

Petruchio (To the audience): Watch me psych her out. Killer shrew indeed! *(Katherina comes in.)* Good morning, dear Kate!

Kate: I prefer to be addressed as Katherina.

Petruchio: But everyone calls you Kate. All I hear is lovely Kate, wonderful Kate, and even gentle Kate—and modest Kate—and also angel buttercup baby-doll sugar plum Kate—And they're so right. Your reputation precedes you. And so, here I am—to propose marriage!

Kate: You're cracked. But let me help you out. Which way did you come in?

Petruchio: Ah, ha, ha, ha! You're so funny! What a sense of humour!

Kate: Have you got another lute handy? I could smash it over your head, too.

Petruchio: I would love to be smashed over the head with a lute—but first I would want to play it and sing you a song of love.

Kate: The last guy who tried to serenade me got a bucket of slops poured on his head.

Petruchio: You speak so sweetly. How I would love to feel your lips on mine.

Kate: Try imagining a giant squid sucking your scalp off.

Petruchio: Ah, you thrill me! My heart is racing a mile a minute!

Kate: Then you should lie down. There's a horse trough out back, and it's full of water.

Petruchio: Wait! I feel a poem coming!—Here it is! (*Recites*)

As the breezes stir the leaves,

And as the prairie sings,

So is our love sent from Heaven

On the eagle's wings.

And as the winds do blow, my love,

As the winds do blow,

My love for you is like the wind,

To follow where you go.

Kate: Very good. I have one for you. (*Recites*)

The way the piss splatters in the bucket,

The way the vomit stains the rug,

The way the cat anoints her litter

With ammonia sweet and bowel mud,

The way the armpit reeks at evening,

The way the semen dries like glue,

The way the mucus clogs our senses—

That's the way I love you.

Petruchio: Oh! I am transported!

Kate: All the way to Devil's Island, I hope.

Petruchio: We could go there for our honeymoon. Any place would be paradise if you were there.

Kate: You're totally deranged if you think you'll ever go on a honeymoon with me.

Petruchio: Not at all. I intend to marry you. Your father has approved. I'm right for you. And you were meant for me. You like to think of yourself as a holy terror to all men, but that's only because you haven't met the right one—until now. If you marry me, you'll change completely. You'll be agreeable and obedient, and you'll be glad for it.—Ah, here comes your father.

(Baptista returns with Gremio and Tranio.)

Baptista: So, Petruchio, how are you getting along with my daughter?

Petruchio: Brilliantly. We're mo-o-o-oving in the right direction. *(He makes the weird gesture.)*

Kate: Where did you find this guy, father?

Baptista: He just showed up.—Why do you look so annoyed?

Kate: I can't believe you approved of this guy marrying me. He's an idiot.

Petruchio: She doesn't mean that. She really likes me. In fact, we've agreed to get married on Sunday.

Kate: Ha! You can go to the church on Sunday if you want, but I intend to sleep in.

Gremio: I can see you've gotten nowhere with her, Petruchio. You and your brave talk.

Tranio: We were counting on you.

Petruchio: Hey, everything's fine, believe me. You should have been here a few minutes ago. She was holding my hand and running her fingers through my hair, and telling me how much she adored me. You guys were all wrong about her. You don't know how to handle women. *(He takes Katherina by the head, against her will.)* My lovely Kate. I'm going to go to Verona and buy a lot of beautiful clothes for the wedding.—Baptista, you can start planning the banquet and writing up your guest list.

Baptista: I don't know how you did it, but I'm delighted!

Gremio: Then it's a done deal.

Tranio: We're witnesses.

Petruchio: Then I'm off to Verona!—Kiss me, Kate. *(He kisses her on the cheek. She just stands there, bewildered.)* Sunday will be our big day!

(Petruchio leaves quickly, and Katherina goes out slowly in the other direction, shaking her head in disbelief.)

Gremio: Pinch me.—No, on second thought, don't pinch me.

Baptista: At last, I get to give my daughter away.

Tranio: You'll be getting more than you're giving. It's a good deal.

Baptista: I just want it to be a nice, happy marriage.

Gremio: Okay, so now that that's settled, you can start thinking about Bianca. Naturally, I should be the one to marry her.

Tranio: I love her more.

Gremio: You're too young to love with any understanding.

Tranio: Why would she want an old man like you?

Baptista: Let's not have a fight about it.—Lucentio, you think that a marriage should be a good deal. So let's follow your rule. Whoever offers the best deal—to Bianca, that is—gets to marry her.—Gremio, what do you say?

Gremio: I have more money than I know what to do with. You've been to my house. You know what I've got. Every square inch is pure luxury. And I've got trunks in the basement full of gold and other valuables. My farm could feed half of Italy. And I own a hundred thousand shares of a new company called Coca Cola, which will be worth a lot someday. Okay, so I'm old. But while I'm alive, I'll be good to her. And when I die she inherits everything.

Tranio: Whatever he's got, I can match. My father will give me plenty. I'll have a hundred thousand acres of land in a place called Florida. And I live off dividends from my stocks.

Gremio: I own the best merchant ship operating out of Marseille.

Tranio: My father owns a dozen ships, and a sardine plant in Portugal. I have a lot more than Gremio.

(Tranio and Baptista look at Gremio for a reply.)

Gremio: Well—I still love Bianca the most.

Tranio: I have more to offer, so I think I'm entitled to marry her.

Baptista: Yes. I would have to agree. Of course, I must have your father's assurance that you'll get all that you say you will. But what if you die before your father does?

Tranio: Why worry about that? He's old and I'm young.

Gremio: A young man can die, too. You could be hit by a meteor.

Baptista: All right—enough. This is my decision. Katherina is getting married on Sunday. The following Sunday, you, Lucentio, get to marry Bianca—assuming you can guarantee what you've offered. If not, Gremio gets to marry her.—I have to go check on dinner. Excuse me.

(Baptista leaves.)

Gremio: You think your father's going to give you your inheritance ahead of time and then have to depend on you? No way!

(*Gremio leaves.*)

Tranio (To the audience): Of course, it was a bluff. Lucentio's well off, but not that well off. I had to buy him some time, that's all. Now we have to produce his father, Vincentio—or, rather, someone to impersonate him.

(*Tranio leaves.*)

Act 3, Scene 1. *In Baptista's house. Lucentio and Hortensio, both still disguised as the tutors, come in with Bianca. Hortensio is holding the lute.*

Lucentio: You ought to slow down, Signior Litio. Katherina clobbered you with the lute. That's what you get for being too smart.

Hortensio: I'm smarter than you, Signior Cambio. I'm going to give Bianca a music lesson first. You can wait your turn.

Lucentio: No, I should go first. I'll read some classics to her. After that. she'll be more receptive to some music.

Hortensio: You're starting to get up my nose, you know that?

Bianca: Hey, how about letting me decide? I may be your student, but I'm not a child.—Signior Litio, you'll need a few minutes to fix the lute anyway, so why not let Signior Cambio read to me first?

Lucentio: Right. That makes more sense.

Hortensio: The moment I finish fixing the lute, your lesson is over.

Lucentio: Oh, leave us alone.

(*Hortensio moves apart to work on the lute.*)

Bianca: And now, Signior Cambio, why don't you read something to me in Latin?

Lucentio: Yes. I have a nice bit of poetry here. (*He recites from a book.*)

“Tam gratum est mihi quam ferunt puellae
pernici aureolum fuisse malum,
quod zonam soluit diu ligatam.”

Bianca: How nice. And what does it mean?

(*Lucentio moves very close to her so as to speak without being overheard.*)

Lucentio: It means—I'm not really Cambio. I'm Lucentio—the son of Vincentio of Pisa. I had to disguise myself to get close to you, because I want to marry you. The one who calls himself Lucentio is really my servant Tranio.

Bianca (Aside to Lucentio): That's very dishonest, Signior.

(Hortensio returns.)

Hortensio: The lute's fixed.

Bianca: Try it. (Hortensio plucks the strings.) No, it's not quite right, I don't think.

Hortensio: All right. I'll try again. (He moves apart and works on the lute.)

Bianca (Aside to Lucentio): That was a shameful trick. I shouldn't forgive you.

Lucentio (Aside to Bianca): I had no other choice. At least give me a chance.

Bianca (Aside to Lucentio): I'll think about it.

(Hortensio returns.)

Hortensio: The lute's fixed now. (He plucks the strings.)

Lucentio: The low notes are still off.

Hortensio: They are not. You're the one who's off. (Aside to the audience) I think this guy's making a move on Bianca. I'm going to have to keep a close eye on him.

Bianca (Back to normal voice): That was a very interesting lesson, Signior Cambio. Now I think it's time to have a music lesson with Signior Litio.

Hortensio (To Lucentio): Why don't you go outside and pick some poison ivy?

Lucentio: I don't do botany. (Aside to the audience) I'm going to have to keep an eye on this alleged music teacher. I think he wants to make a move on Bianca. (Lucentio moves away, pretending to leave.)

Hortensio: Now, madam, I will teach you the musical scale.

Bianca: I already know the musical scale.

Hortensio: But this is the new deconstructed scale that they teach at, uh—the Sorbonne. (He strums.) A—A—A—(He leans closer and speaks to her confidentially.) This means that I'm Hortensio, not Litio. (Strums) B—B—B—That means, take me as your husband. (Strums) C—C—C—That means I love you. (Strums) D—D—D—I forget what that means. (Strums) E—E—E—Either take me as your husband, or I will die.—Right, D was for die.

Bianca: I don't believe they teach that at the Sorbonne.

(The servant Cauchemar comes in.)

Cauchemar: Miss Bianca, your father would like you to help decorate Miss Katherina's room. Tomorrow is her wedding.

Bianca. Of course. (To Lucentio and Hortensio) I have to go. Thank you for the lessons.

(Bianca leaves with Cauchemar.)

Lucentio: Well, I guess school's out for today.

(*Lucentio leaves.*)

Hortensio (To the audience): I don't like that guy. If Bianca encourages him, I'll dump her and go find another woman, and then she'll be sorry.

(*He leaves.*)

Act 3, Scene 2. *On the street in front of Baptista's house. Baptista comes in with Gremio, Tranio (disguised as Lucentio), Katherina, Bianca, and Lucentio (disguised as Cambio), and (optionally) Servants.*

Baptista (To Tranio): Today's the wedding, but where's Petruchio? If he doesn't show up, I'll be humiliated.

Kate: I'm the one who's going to be humiliated. I told you he was crazy. He probably courts women all over Italy and pretends to want to marry them. And then he has a good laugh when people make arrangements and wait for him to show up.

Tranio: No, no, he'll be here. He's a bit flaky, but he's honest.

Kate: I wish I'd never met him!

(*Katherina leaves in tears, followed by Bianca [and optionally Servants].*)

Baptista: I don't blame her for being pissed off.

(*Biondello arrives.*)

Biondello: Signior Baptista, I have some news. Petruchio is on his way.

Baptista: When will he get here?

Biondello: Um—soon—I hope. But you may be shocked when you see him.

Baptista: Why's that?

Biondello: He's wearing ragged clothes, his sword is rusty, and his horse is diseased and can hardly walk.

Baptista: What the hell?—Is he by himself?

Biondello: No. His valet, Grumio, is with him. But he looks just as bad.

Tranio (To Baptista): I'm sure it's nothing. He likes to dress casually, that's all.

Baptista: Well, better to have him back however he's dressed than not at all.

(*Petruchio and Grumio arrive.*)

Petruchio: Oy! I'm back!

Baptista: Finally!

Tranio: You look like hell, dude.

Petruchio: Never mind. Where's the bride? We got a wedding to go to.

Baptista: You're not going to get married looking like that, are you?

Tranio: What the hell happened to you anyway?

Petruchio: Oh, hell—just—well—you know—a lot of bullshit, that's all. I'll explain it later. Where's Kate? It's time to go to the church.

Tranio: Dude, you can't go like that. Go to my room and put on some proper clothes.

Petruchio: What for? She's marrying me, not my clothes.

Baptista: Oh, no. You go change your clothes.

Petruchio: My clothes don't matter. Where is she anyway?—Come on, Grumio.

(Petruchio and Grumio leave.)

Tranio: He gets weird like this sometimes. Maybe you can get him to look more presentable.

Baptista: Yes. I'd better.

(Baptista, Gremio, Biondello, and the Servants leave.)

Tranio: I have to clinch things for you with the old man by finding someone to impersonate your father.

Lucentio: The other tutor is trying to make a move on Bianca. I think I should elope with her. After that, it doesn't matter what anyone thinks.

Tranio: Yeah, that's a good idea. I'll watch for an opportunity for you. We have to keep a step ahead of the competition, and we have to con the old man. If we can manage all that, you get the girl.

(Gremio returns.)

Tranio: Gremio, did he change his clothes?

Gremio: No. They went straight to the church. I just came back from there.

Tranio: Already?

Gremio: Yes. That guy's a lunatic. He disrupted the whole ceremony. He got impatient with the priest and punched him in the nose. Then he grabbed the wine and drank it all down. And then he grabbed Kate and gave her a loud kiss. It was so vulgar, I ran out.—Oh! I think they're back.

(Petruchio and Katherina come in, with Baptista, Bianca, Hortensio, Grumio, and the Servants.)

Petruchio: Hey, great wedding, everyone! Thanks for coming. Unfortunately, we can't stay for the banquet.

Baptista: What? You're leaving?

Petruchio: Yeah, I gotta be out of town by sundown. If you knew why, you'd want me gone, too-ha!—Well, goodbye.

Tranio: But the banquet is for you.

Gremio: Surely you can stay and eat with us.

Petruchio: Nope. Can't do it.

Kate: But this is our wedding banquet! Please stay! I'm begging you!

Petruchio: Oh, you're begging me? That's nice. I appreciate it. But we can't stay. Sorry.

Kate: If you love me, you'll stay!

Petruchio: Grumio! The horses!

Grumio: The horses are ready, sir.

Kate: Well, I'm not leaving! You can go on your merry way without me!

Petruchio: Aw, honeybunch, don't be angry.

Kate: I'll be angry as much as I want to be!—Father, don't say anything. He can wait until I'm ready to leave.

Gremio: Aha! Petruchio, now you see what kind of woman you've married.

Kate: I will not be made a fool of.—Everyone, go sit down for dinner.

Petruchio: The bride commands the guests! You must obey! But she's coming with me, because I'm the husband, and the husband commands the wife. And don't any of you try to interfere.—Grumio, show them your sword! (*Grumio unsheathes his sword, which is broken, rusty, and pathetic-looking.*) Now take your mistress by the hand and bring her along.—Don't worry, Kate, I'll fight off a whole legion if I have to!

(*Petruchio, Katherina, and Grumio leave.*)

Baptista: Let them go. If they stayed, the whole house would probably explode.

Gremio: What a pair.

Tranio: If you hear fireworks in the distance, that'll be them.

Lucentio: What do you think, Bianca?

Bianca: They're both nuts—but he's the bigger one by far.

Baptista: All right, everyone. We'll just carry on without the bride and groom.—Lucentio, you can sit in the groom's place, and Bianca will sit in Kate's place.

Tranio: Ah, how nice!

Baptista: Okay, let's go eat.

(Everyone leaves for the dining room.)

Act 4, Scene 1. *The hall of Petruchio's country house. Grumio comes in, caked with mud.*

Grumio: What a bloody miserable trip! That's the worst goddamn road in Italy! Nothing but potholes and mud! The horse is ready to collapse, and Petruchio is ranting all the way.—Yo! Curtis!

(Curtis, a Servant, comes in.)

Curtis: No need to shout. I'm not deaf.

Grumio: Aw, nuts! I feel like a popsicle made of slush. The boss wants a fire burning when he arrives with Madam Katherina.

Curtis: They're on their way, then?

Grumio: Yes. He sent me on ahead. Build a good fire. I need to warm up.

Curtis: I've got a fire already. Is she a killer shrew like everyone says?

Grumio: Well, she was. I don't know what she'll be like by the time she gets here. She may be even worse. I don't know. But he's sure in a foul mood. That fire better be going real good, that's all.

Curtis: Relax.

Grumio: The boss is going to want his dinner ready and the house tidied up and decorated. And the staff should be dressed properly.

Curtis: Everything's ready, don't worry. So what news do you have?

Grumio: Only that the two of them were arguing all the way. They fell off their saddles into the mud. He was riding behind her going down this hill—

Curtis: What, they were both on the same horse?

Grumio: What do you care?

Curtis: I was thinking of the horse, that's all.

Grumio: No. She fell first, and the horse fell on her. And he blamed me for it and slapped me on the head. And then she tried to defend me, and he yelled at her for it.

Curtis: Bloody hell. What's got into him?

Grumio: I don't know. I've never seen him act so belligerent. So just make sure all the staff are on their best behaviour.

Curtis: They will be, don't worry.

Grumio: Call them.

Curtis (Calls to the wing): You hear that, everyone? Get ready to greet the master and the new mistress!

(Several Servants come in.)

Servants: Hey, Grumio! Welcome back!

First Servant: Everything's ready. Where are they?

Grumio: They're coming now. Everybody look sharp.

(Petruchio and Katherina come in.)

Petruchio: What are you guys doing? Why wasn't there somebody outside to take my horse? Why aren't you at your posts? Where's the nitwit I sent ahead of me?

Grumio: Right here, sir.

Petruchio: Can't you do anything right? I told you to have the servants outside to meet me.

Grumio: Oh—well—uh—Nat lost a button on his coat—and Gabe had to shine his shoes—and Peter was brushing his hat—and Walter was repairing his knife. And everyone else was in a generally slovenly condition. But at least everyone's accounted for and awaiting your orders.

Petruchio: Go on and serve dinner. (*The Servants depart.*) Well, here was are, Kate. Let's sit down. You must be starving. (*Petruchio and Katherina sit at the table.*) Bring the food! Hurry up! (*The Servants come in with the food.*) Somebody take off my boots! Come on! (*A Servant tries to remove a boot.*) Ow! Not like that, you clumsy oaf! (*He slaps the Servant.*) Be careful! (*The Servant takes off the boots.*) Cheer up, Kate. How do you like the place? It's what they call Pre-Enlightenment style.—Hey! Bring me some water! (*A Servant comes in with water.*) Where's my dog? And somebody go call my cousin Ferdinand. (*A Servant leaves. To Katherina*) You'll like Ferdinand. He breeds skunks. He wins prizes for them. Here—wash your hands. (*The Servant drops the pitcher.*) You moron! (*He slaps the Servant.*)

Kate: Stop! Don't hit him. It was just an accident.

Petruchio: I gotta be tough with these fools. Let 'em know who's boss—know what I mean? Come on, sit down. You must be hungry.—What's this? Mutton?

First Servant: Yes.

Petruchio: Who served it?

Second Servant: I did, sir.

Petruchio: It's overcooked! Take it away! Take everything away! That cook is an idiot! You're all idiots! I ought to give all of you a whipping!

(*The Servants leave with all the food.*)

Kate: Petruchio! I'm surprised at you. The meat looked all right to me.

Petruchio: It wasn't all right. Bad food makes me angry. You shouldn't eat it either. We won't eat at all tonight. The cook will do better tomorrow. Come, let me show you the bedroom.

(Petruchio, Katherina, and Curtis leave. Then the other Servants return timidly.)

First Servant: What a scene!

Second Servant: And she was the one I was worried about.

Third Servant: There's some deeper meaning to this. I think it's an act. He doesn't have any cousin Ferdinand.

Fourth Servant: That's right. Or a dog either.

Third Servant: It's some kind of psychological warfare.

Fourth Servant: Against her?

Third Servant: Yeah. That's what I think.

(Curtis returns.)

Curtis: He's yelling at her in the bedroom. He's lecturing her about self-control.

Grumio: He's either totally out of his mind, or he's being very clever.

Curtis: I hear him coming. We'd better leave.

(They all leave. Then Petruchio comes in.)

Petruchio (Smiling slyly, to the audience): She's hungry, and she's tired. And I'm going to keep her hungry and tired. I'll keep her up all night. I'll pretend to look for bedbugs. I'll strip the bed and throw everything around. And then I'll rearrange all the furniture. Sleep deprivation and hunger. That's how you break down somebody's will. By the time I'm through with her, she won't be a killer shrew any more. She'll be Minnie Mouse. Just wait. You'll see.

(Petruchio goes out.)

Act 4, Scene 2. *On the street in front of Baptista's house. Tranio and Hortensio come in, still posing as Lucentio and Litio.*

Tranio: What do you think, Litio? Is Bianca interested in the other tutor? I assumed she liked me best. Or do you think she's leading me on?

Hortensio: I'm telling you, he's been making a move on her.—Look. They're coming this way. Let's just move over here and spy on them.

(Tranio and Hortensio move to a place of suggested concealment. Then Bianca comes in with Lucentio, still posing as Cambio.)

Bianca: Tell me, what book are you reading now?

Lucentio: I like to read what I already know about—the *Kama Sutra*.

Bianca: Oh, so you're an expert on love, are you?

Lucentio: If you only knew. I could make you so-o-o happy.

(Bianca and Lucentio kiss and caress each other.)

Hortensio (Aside to Tranio): You see that? What do you think now, Signior Lucentio?

Tranio (Aside to Hortensio): Tsk! I am so disillusioned, Litio.

Hortensio (Aside to Tranio): Listen, you can stop calling me Litio. I'm not Litio. And I'm not a musician. I'm Hortensio.

Tranio (Aside to Hortensio): Ah! The other suitor. I suspected it.

Hortensio (Aside to Tranio): Well, I'm not a suitor any more. Not after this.

Tranio (Aside to Hortensio): I don't blame you, sir. In fact, I agree with you. I don't want her any more either.

Hortensio (Aside to Tranio): You're a wise man. I commend you.—Such a vulgar display!—Well, never mind. I know a rich widow who's quite fond of me. I'll marry her.

Tranio (Aside to Hortensio): Before you do, go visit Petruchio. You'll learn a thing or two about how to tame a wife.

Hortensio (Aside to Tranio): Think so? Well, I just might do that. Thank you. Goodbye.

(Hortensio leaves. Lucentio approaches with Bianca.)

Tranio: Well done, Bianca! You've just gotten rid of two excess men—myself and the lute player.

Bianca (Ironically): Oh, dear! Poor me!

Tranio: But don't worry about him. He's already got a rich widow lined up.

(Biondello rushes in.)

Biondello: Master, I have good news!

Tranio: Ha!—He still calls me master. I love it.—What's the news, trusty servant?

Biondello: You wanted someone to impersonate Vincentio.

Tranio and Lucentio: Yes!

Biondello: Well, I just spotted an old guy who'd be perfect. I don't know who he is, but he's the right age, and he's wearing good clothes. He's coming in this direction.

Lucentio (To Tranio): How do you want to play this?

Tranio: Let's see what he has to say. Then I'll pitch him some bullshit to get him to help us out. You take Bianca inside and leave it to me.

(Lucentio and Bianca leave. Then a Pedant [Scholar] comes in.)

Tranio: Hello, sir!

Pedant: Hello.

Tranio: I haven't seen you before.

Pedant: No. I'm just passing through.

Tranio: Nice suit. Are you in business?

Pedant: No, I'm I pedant.

Tranio: A pedant? What does a pedant do?

Pedant: I practice pedantry, of course.

Tranio: Pedantry?

Biondello (To Tranio): I think that means he fucks other men in the ass.

Tranio: What!

Pedant: No! A pedant is a scholar. I'm devoted to scholarship.

Biondello: Whew! That's a relief.

Tranio: So you're into books and all that. That's nice. So where are you headed?

Pedant: I'm going up to Rome and then on to Tripoli.

Tranio: Ah. Well, you're not into geography, that's for sure. So where are you from?

Pedant: Mantua.

Tranio: Mantua? Oh, my God! And you've come to Padua?

Pedant: Why? Is there something wrong?

Tranio: Man, don't you know there's a death sentence here in Padua for anyone from Mantua?

Pedant: I never heard that.

Tranio: I guess you've been out of touch.

Pedant: What's happened?

Tranio: Oh, a big fuss. There's a big spat between the Duke of Padua and the Duke of Mantua over some ships that were seized. It's too complicated to explain. Good thing you didn't meet any sentries on the way.

Pedant: Oh, my goodness! What am I going to do? I've got Florentine money that I have to exchange.

Tranio: I'll exchange it for you, don't worry. By the way, have you ever been to Pisa?

Pedant: Oh, yes. I know Pisa quite well.

Tranio: Do you know a merchant in Pisa named Vincentio?

Pedant: Not personally, but I know who he is.

Tranio: He's my father. And he looks just like you. (*Biondello rolls his eyes for the benefit of the audience.*) And that's a lucky coincidence, because I can save your life while you're here in Padua. You can stay in my house—for a while. I'll take care of your business, and I have some business I need you to help me with. What do you say?

Pedant: Okay. It's a good thing I bumped into you.

Tranio: Yes—and for me, too. You see, I'm waiting for my father to guarantee a dowry for my marriage to a certain lady—Bianca, the daughter of a Signior Baptista Minola. I'll explain everything to you on the way home. And you'll need some different clothes. Come on.

(*Tranio, Biondello, and the Pedant leave.*)

Act 4, Scene 3. A room in Petruchio's house. Katherina and Grumio come in.

Kate: I can't take this any more. He won't let me eat or sleep. He says it's for my own good. Grumio, I must have food. Bring me something—anything.

Grumio: How about a calf's foot?

Kate: Yes. Fine. Anything.

Grumio: Oh, but calf's foot elevates the, uh, testosterone—and results in mitotic cell division. Perhaps some grilled goat neck sweetbreads.

Kate: Yes. Fine. That'll do.

Grumio: Oh, but that contains a lot of zirconium—and in your condition it would probably cortisulate the crepuscles.

Kate: What?

Grumio: It would make you angry.

Kate: I'm already angry!

Grumio: Perhaps some beef with mustard.

Kate: Yes! I love beef with mustard!

Grumio: The mustard's awfully hot, though. It comes from Novosibirsk.

Kate: All right, then just bring me the beef without any mustard.

Grumio: Beef without mustard? Oh, no, no, no, no. That isn't allowed in this house.

Kate: Bring me anything!

Grumio: I could bring you mustard without any beef.

Kate: Damn you! This is a conspiracy! You're all out to starve me! Get out!

(Petruchio and Hortensio come in with meat.)

Petruchio: What's the matter, Kate? Are you unhappy?

Kate: I'm miserable!

Petruchio: There, there, now. Look what I've brought you—some nice meat. *(He puts the plate on a table.)* Don't I get any thanks for that? No? Nothing to say? All right, I'll just take it away, then.

Kate: No. Leave it.

Petruchio: You have to thank me before you can eat it.

Kate (Containing her anger): Thank you.

Hortensio: Shame on you, Petruchio. It's your fault that she's miserable.—It's all right, madam. I'll keep you company.

Petruchio (Aside to Hortensio): Make sure you eat all the meat.—Now, Kate, I have a great idea. Let's dress you up in some fancy clothes and go pay your father a visit. *(Hortensio is devouring the meat.)* I've asked the tailor to bring you his best gown to show you. And the haberdasher, too. After all, I want my wife to look good.—Ah, here they are. *(The Tailor and Haberdasher come in and begin to lay out their wares.)* Show me what you've got.

Haberdasher: This is the cap you ordered, sir.

Petruchio: What? This? I wouldn't give this to a Polish housemaid! You call this high fashion? Take it away! Bring me something more high-class.

Kate: But I like that cap. It's the style that's in fashion.

Petruchio: When you settle down and act obedient, then you can have it—not before.

Hortensio (Aside to the audience): Oho!

Kate: Stop treating me like a child! I have the right to speak for myself!

Petruchio: Ah, yes. Of course. You're right. It's a terrible cap. I love you for refusing it.

Kate: But I like it!

(Petruchio gestures with his thumb to the Haberdasher to get out, and he does.)

Petruchio: What about a gown, then? What do you have to show me, tailor?

Tailor: This, sir.

Petruchio: Oh, good grief! I wouldn't give this to a naked refugee. What kind of fashion is this?

Tailor: You asked me to make something contemporary.

Petruchio: Yes, but this is all wrong. Look at this sleeve. And look at these—whatever-you-call-them. Terrible workmanship. Donate it to the Salvation Army.

Kate: But it's beautiful! What do you want me to look like—a rag doll?

Petruchio: Yes, tailor! Do you want her to look like a rag doll?

Tailor: She said that to you, sir.

Petruchio: What! How dare you! This is an outrage! This gown is a deliberate insult to me!

Tailor: No, sir. I followed exactly the instructions given to me by your valet.

Grumio: You did not! I won't have you insult me the same way you'd insult a gentleman!

Tailor: I have the order right here. (*He takes a paper from his pocket and begins to read*) “A loose gown with a small, tight cape and a full sleeve, creatively cut.”

Grumio: What a lie. I'd never write anything as absurd as “a sleeve.” Does my mistress have only one arm?

Tailor: This order is correct. You are the liar.

Grumio: You want to take this argument outside?

Petruchio: Never mind. I don't want the gown. It's not for me.

Grumio: Of course, it's not for you. It's for Madam.

Petruchio (To the Tailor): Take it back for your master's use.

Grumio: What? Is his master a transvestite? I don't think I like the sound of that.

Petruchio (Aside to Hortensio): Pay the tailor for the gown. (*To the Tailor*) Just take the gown and go.

(*Hortensio escorts the Tailor.*)

Hortensio (Aside to the Tailor): It's okay. You'll get paid for the gown. Never mind the little scene.

(*The Tailor leaves.*)

Petruchio: Well, I don't think we need fancy clothes to go visit your father, Kate. After all, we are who we are, not what we wear, right? You could wear a potato sack, and I wouldn't mind a bit. Let's go visit your father and have dinner and have some fun. (*To Grumio*) Get the horses ready. (*Grumio leaves.*) It's almost seven a.m. now, so we should get there by noon, in time for dinner.

Kate: What are you talking about? It's two o'clock now. We won't get there till suppertime.

Petruchio (Shouting to the wing): Grumio! Forget it! (*To Kate*) I wish you wouldn't contradict me. I'm not getting on my horse until seven a.m. When we go, we go at the time I say we go.

Hortensio (Aside to the audience): Sun, stand thou still!

Act 4, Scene 4. *On the street in front of Baptista's house. Tranio, still posing as Lucentio, comes in with the Pedant, now posing as Vincentio.*

Tranio: This is the house. Are you ready?

Pedant: Sure.

(Biondello comes in.)

Tranio: Did you speak to Baptista?

Biondello: Yes. I told him Lucentio's father had arrived in town.

Tranio: Good. Okay, places, everyone.—And—action. *(Baptista comes in with Lucentio disguised as Cambio.)* Baptista! We're delighted to find you! This is my father, Vincentio.

Baptista: I'm very happy to meet you, sir.

Pedant: The pleasure is mine, sir. This has worked out quite well. I had to come to Padua on business, and I was thrilled to learn my son intends to marry your daughter. He speaks very highly of you.

Baptista: I'm happy to hear that. I think this will be an excellent match.

Pedant: So do I. And I don't want to delay it for a minute. I'd be happy to sit down with you right now and sign a contract. You don't have to show me anything. Your reputation is good enough for me.

Baptista: Thank you. If you're willing to grant your son an advance on his inheritance, then I'd say we're in complete agreement.

Pedant: Yes, yes, yes!

Baptista: But for the sake of privacy, we should go somewhere where no one can spy on us. I want to keep this matter confidential.

Tranio: Let's go back to my place, then. My father's staying with me. You can send someone to bring Bianca, and I'll send my servant to find a notary.—Um, the only thing is, I have very little on hand for dinner.

Baptista: Don't worry about it.—Cambio, you can tell Bianca that Vincentio and I are writing a marriage contract.

Lucentio: Yes. I will.

(Lucentio leaves.)

Tranio (To Biondello): Don't just stand there. Go find a notary.

Biondello: Yes, sir!

(Biondello leaves.)

Tranio: So, let's go back to my house, Baptista.

Baptista: Sure thing.

(Tranio, Baptista, and the Pedant leave. After a brief pause, Lucentio and Biondello return, with Biondello pulling Lucentio gently by the sleeve.)

Biondello: Shh! Lucentio.

Lucentio: What?

Biondello: Tranio has arranged everything. Here's the deal. Baptista will be told that the wedding will take place right after they sign the contract. You have to get to the church first with Bianca and get married before her father realizes he's been tricked.

Lucentio: Boy, he'll really be pissed.

Biondello: Yeah, but once you're legally married, he won't be able to do anything about it. He'll have to accept it.

Lucentio (Shaking his head): I don't know.

Biondello: Listen, you want that girl, don't you?

Lucentio: Sure.

Biondello: Okay, then. This is the best plan Tranio could think of. Hell, you're the one who wanted to elope with her.

Lucentio: True.

Biondello: You just have to round up a few witnesses and get over to Saint Luke's Church. I'm going there now to alert the priest and make sure he's standing by so he can marry you the minute you walk in.

Lucentio: Okay. *(Biondello leaves.)* Whew! After all this, she'd better say yes.

(Lucentio leaves.)

Act 4, Scene 5. *On a road. Petruchio comes in with Katherina, Hortensio, and some Servants, including Grumio.*

Petruchio: I can't wait to see Baptista again. And, look—we have a nice full moon to guide us.

Kate: Moon? That's the sun.

Petruchio: No, that's the moon.

Kate: I think I know the difference between the sun and the moon.

Petruchio: If I say it's the moon, it's the moon, and don't argue. If I say it's Jupiter, it's Jupiter. If you insist on being disagreeable, we'll turn right around and go back home.

Hortensio (To Kate): You'd better agree with him.

Kate: Fine. It's the moon. It's Jupiter. It's a balloon. It's a mirage. Whatever you like.

Petruchio: It's the moon.

Kate: Good. It's the moon—obviously.

Petruchio: You're lying. It's the sun.

Kate: Whatever you say, I agree with you.

Hortensio: You see, Petruchio? She's agreeing with you. Now we can go.

Petruchio: Yes. We'll go exactly as I say we should go—precisely and logically.—Oh. Who's coming? (*The real Vincentio comes in.*) Good morning, madam.—Look, Kate. Have you ever seen a more noble lady than this?

Hortensio (*Smacks his forehead. Aside to the audience*): Uh, oh.

Kate: Why, yes, you're absolutely right, my dear. Such a fine lady.—Good morning, madam.

Petruchio: Are you crazy? This is an old man.

Kate (To Vincentio): Oh! I'm sorry, sir. The sun blinded me for a second. How foolish of me.

Petruchio: Where are you going, sir? You could come along with us.

Vincentio: You are a strange pair—but never mind. My name is Vincentio. I'm from Pisa, and I'm on my way to Padua to visit my son.

Petruchio: Oh, how nice. What's his name? Perhaps I know him.

Vincentio: Lucentio.

Petruchio: Lucentio! I know him! He's engaged to my wife's sister, Bianca. Lovely girl. Good family. You'll like her.—Well! Well! I guess we're practically in-laws, then, aren't we? Come along with us and we'll take you to your son.

Vincentio: He never told me anything about—Say, you wouldn't be putting me on now, would you?

Petruchio: Absoluely not. Come along and see for yourself.

(*All leave except for Hortensio, who lingers for the benefit of the audience.*)

Hortensio: Boy, that guy should give seminars on how to dominate women. Now I've learned something. That widow better watch out. When I marry her, she'll know who wears the pants in the family.

(*Hortensio leaves.*)

Act 5, Scene 1. *Outside of Lucentio's house in Padua. Gremio comes in alone and stands off to one side of the house. The suggestion is that he is either not noticed or is out of sight of Biondello, Lucentio, and Bianca, who now arrive. Lucentio is no longer in disguise.*

Biondello: The priest is waiting for you. You should go right away.

Lucentio: All right. You stay here in case you're needed.

(*Lucentio and Bianca leave.*)

Biondello: No, on second thought, I'd better make sure you get there all right. Then I can come right back.

(*Biondello leaves.*)

Gremio: Where the hell is Cambio? He should've been here by now.

(*Petruchio and Katherina arrive with Vincentio, Grumio and Servants.*)

Petruchio: Here's Lucentio's house. I'll leave you here. We have to go on to Baptista's house.

Vincentio: No, stick around. We'll have a drink before you go.

(*Vincentio knocks at Lucentio's door, which attracts Gremio's attention.*)

Gremio: You should knock louder. They might be busy inside.

Vincentio: Oh?—All right. Thanks.

(*He knocks louder. The Pedant appears at the window.*)

Pedant: Who's knocking?

Vincentio: I'm seeking Lucentio. Is he home?

Pedant: He's busy.

Vincentio: Oh, really? And suppose I had two hundred dollars and wanted to show him a good time?

Pedant: He doesn't need your two hundred dollars as long as I'm around.

Petruchio (To Vincentio): Ha! You see? Everyone in Padua likes Lucentio. (*To the Pedant*) Sir! Regardless of whether Lucentio is occupied, please tell him that his father is here from Pisa.

Pedant: Yes, he knows that. You're looking at him.

Petruchio: Looking at who?

Pedant: His father. Vincentio. That's me.

Vincentio: You are not!

Pedant: I certainly am.

Petruchio (To Vincentio): Say, what's your game, mister? Why did you tell me you were Lucentio's father?

Pedant (Alarmed): What! Arrest him! He's—he's out to commit some kind of fraud!

(Biondello comes in, not realizing at first that his old master, Vincentio, is standing there. When he sees Vincentio, he turns away and tries to pull up his collar to hide his face.)

Biondello: Oops!

Vincentio (To Biondello): Hey! Come here, you!

Biondello: Who, me?

Vincentio: Yes, you! I know you! And don't pretend you don't know your old master.

Biondello (Turned away): You're mistaken, sir. I don't know you.

Vincentio: What? You weasel! You don't know your master's father? Vincentio!

Biondello: Vincentio? Oh—yes—of course—A fine gentleman. There he is at the window.

Vincentio: Him?—Why, you insolent son of a bitch! *(He slaps Biondello on the head.)*

Biondello: Agh! Help! Murder! He wants to kill me!

(Biondello flees.)

Pedant: Help! Lucentio! Baptista! Officers! Help!

(The Pedant disappears from the window.)

Petruchio (To Kate): Well, this should be interesting.

(He leads her apart. Then the Pedant comes out of the house with some Servants, Baptista, and Tranio.)

Tranio: Did you slap my servant? How dare you!

Vincentio: My, my! Look at those expensive clothes. I'm scrimping and saving in Pisa so my son Lucentio can come here and go to the university, and now I see that he's squandering my money dressing up his servant.

Baptista (To Tranio): What's he talking about?

Tranio: Ignore him. He's crazy. *(To Vincentio)* What do you care if I'm dressed up? My father paid for my clothes.

Vincentio: Your father is a sailmaker in Bergamo!

Baptista: That's absurd, sir! Who do you think this gentleman is?

Vincentio: I know damn well who he is. I've known him since he was a child. His name is—Tranio.

Pedant: You're crazy! His name is Lucentio, and he's my son! I'm Vincentio!

Vincentio: If he claims to be Lucentio, he must have murdered his master!—Arrest him! In the name of the Duke!—My son! Where is my son? *(To Tranio)* What have you done with him, you villain?

Tranio: You're crazy!—Officers! Officers! (*An Officer comes in.*) Arrest this man! He's an impostor! He's a lunatic!—*Baptista*, you must see to it that he's prosecuted.

Vincentio: Me? Arrested? Prosecuted? For what? For being *Vincentio*?

Gremio: Wait a minute, Officer. Don't arrest him.

Baptista: You stay out of this.

Gremio: Hold on, *Baptista*. I think he is who he says he is. I think he's *Vincentio*.

Pedant: Prove it.

Gremio: I can't prove it, but I believe it.

Tranio: Oh, then you're saying I'm not *Lucentio*.

Gremio: Yes, you're *Lucentio*.

Baptista: Officer, arrest this man!

Vincentio: This is an outrage! Is this how you treat visitors in Padua?

(*Biondello returns with Lucentio and Bianca, but he stops short.*)

Biondello (Aside to Lucentio): We're screwed. Pretend you don't know him.

Lucentio (Normal voice): No, I can't do that. (*He approaches his father.*) I owe you an apology, father.

Vincentio: *Lucentio!* You're alive!

(*Biondello, Tranio, and the Pedant flee.*)

Bianca (Approaching Vincentio): I owe you an apology, too.

Baptista: What are you apologizing for? Where's *Lucentio*?

Lucentio: I'm *Lucentio*—the real one. And this is my father—the real *Vincentio*. I'm sorry I deceived you, but it was the only way I could marry your daughter.

Baptista: You—married—my daughter?

Lucentio: Yes. We've just come from the church.

Gremio: I don't believe this. It's a trick.

Vincentio: When I get my hands on *Tranio*, I'll wring his neck!

Baptista (Looking at Lucentio closely): But you're *Cambio*. You're the tutor. (*To Gremio*) You brought this guy to me.

Gremio: I thought—

Bianca: *Cambio* was really *Lucentio*.

Gremio (Smacking himself on the head): Good grief!

Lucentio: Baptista, the important thing is that Bianca and I love each other. (*To Vincentio*) Please don't be too harsh with Tranio. I put him up to it. Whatever he did or said, it was out of loyalty to me.

Vincentio: I ought to kick his ass for trying to get me arrested.

Baptista (To Lucentio): You married my daughter without my approval. And the contract I signed is useless.

Vincentio: Don't worry about that, Baptista. I'll make an honourable provision for the newlyweds. You'll be satisfied.—But right now somebody's going to get his ass kicked.

(*He leaves.*)

Baptista: I'd better go with him and make sure everything gets sorted out peaceably.

(*He leaves.*)

Lucentio: It's okay, Bianca. I'm sure your father will give us his blessing.

(*Lucentio and Bianca leave.*)

Gremio (Sighs): Oh, well—I didn't get the girl. But at least I can look forward to a good wedding feast.

(*Gremio leaves. Petruchio and Katherina move to centre stage.*)

Kate: Shouldn't we follow them and see how it turns out?

Petruchio: In a moment. But first—kiss me.

Kate: Out here on the street? In front of other people?

Petruchio: Are you ashamed?

Kate: No, I'm not ashamed. It's just that—well—that sort of thing should be private.

Petruchio: Then we'll go straight home. We'll leave Padua at once. (*To Grumio*) Come on, Grumio.

Kate: No, wait. I don't want to leave Padua.—All right, I'll kiss you right here. (*She kisses Petruchio.*) Now can we stay?

Petruchio: Ha, ha—yes. It's so nice to have an obedient wife.

(*They leave.*)

Act 5, Scene 2. *In Lucentio's house. A banquet table. Baptista comes in with Vincentio, Gremio, the Pedant, Lucentio, Bianca, Petruchio, Katherina, Hortensio, and his new wife, the Widow. Servants, including Tranio, Biondello, and Grumio, bring in the food. The guests remain standing until Lucentio tells them where to sit.*

Lucentio: At last! Everything's back to normal, and everyone's happy. Bianca, you can sit next to my father, and I'll sit next to yours. Hortensio, you and your new wife can sit here. Petruchio and Katherina, you can sit here. There's plenty of food and wine, so everyone enjoy.

Petruchio: Eat and drink, eat and drink—that's all you seem to do in Padua.

Baptista: Why not? We like to enjoy ourselves.

Petruchio: Paduans are so easy to get along with.

Hortensio (Seriously): Not everyone.

Petruchio: Oh! Don't scare your wife now.

Widow: He doesn't scare me.

Petruchio: Oh! Now you'll scare him!

Widow: The way your wife scares you?

Petruchio: Ha!

Kate (To the Widow): What do you mean by that?

Widow: I mean that Petruchio thinks that all husbands are in the same situation as him—married to shrews.

Petruchio (Laughing): Really?—What do you say to that, Hortensio?

Hortensio: She's expressing her opinion, that's all.

Petruchio (Laughing): Now there's a gallant answer!

Kate: Wait a minute. *(To the Widow)* I'm not sure I understand what you mean.

Widow: I thought I was clear enough. Your husband is married to a shrew—or so I've heard—so he assumes my husband is, too.

Kate: A shrew? You mean me?

Widow: Who else is married to your husband?

Kate: I am very insulted!

Petruchio: You tell her, Kate!

Hortensio: Answer her back, wife!

Petruchio (Laughing): Watch out! It's a cat fight!

Hortensio: My wife's the bigger cat.

Petruchio: There's loyalty for you. I'll drink to that. *(He drinks.)*

Baptista: Gremio, how do you like this argument?

Gremio: I'm single, so I can be neutral. Let 'em fight it out.

Bianca: Like a couple of goats locking horns, I suppose.

Vincentio (To Bianca): So what do you say?

Bianca: Nothing.

Petruchio: Oh, come on. We men want some entertainment to go with our food.

Bianca: Oh, do you now? Well, why don't you paint targets on your backs and chase each other around with bows and arrows! (*She stands up.*) I think the ladies should withdraw from your company, thank you very much.

(*She walks out, and Katherina and the Widow follow her.*)

Petruchio: The last word to Bianca. Two points for that. (*Raises his glass*) I drink to all losers in the game of love.

Gremio: Thank you.

Tranio (To Petruchio): Some people still think Kate is a killer shrew and you're afraid of her.

Baptista (Laughing and making a gesture at Petruchio): Uh, oh! I think you've just been stuck!

Lucentio: Two points to Tranio.

Petruchio: Go ahead and laugh. I'll bet that my wife is the most obedient one of the three.

Baptista: Ooh, I don't know about that. I think she's the most difficult one.

Lucentio and Hortensio: Yes. Yes.

Petruchio: I'll prove that all of you are wrong. We'll send for our wives, and the one who is quickest to return wins the bet for her husband.

Hortensio: How much?

Lucentio: Let's make it fifty dollars.

Petruchio: You're on.

Hortensio: I'm in. Who wants to go first?

Lucentio: I will.—Biondello, go tell Bianca to come here.

Biondello: Right.

(*He leaves.*)

Baptista: She'll come. I'm sure of it. She's the sweet one.

(*Biondello returns.*)

Biondello: She says she's busy.

Petruchio: What? She's busy? What kind of answer is that?

Gremio: At least it's polite. You may get a worse answer from your wife.

Petruchio: We'll see.

Hortensio: Biondello, tell my wife to come here.

Biondello: Right.

(*He leaves.*)

Petruchio (To Hortensio): Let's see how much she respects your authority.

Hortensio: She will, don't worry.

(*Biondello returns.*)

Biondello: I'm sorry, sir, but she refuses. She says you can come to her.

Gremio: Ha!

Petruchio: So much for your authority.—Grumio, go tell Kate I demand to see her at once.

Grumio: Right, boss.

(*He leaves.*)

Hortensio (Smirking): She won't come.

Petruchio (Mimicking Hortensio): Oh, yes, she will.

(*Katherina comes in.*)

Kate: You wanted to see me, my dear?

Petruchio: What are the other wives doing?

Kate: They're just sitting by the fireplace, talking.

Petruchio: Go and bring them back. Tell them their husbands want them. Bend their arms if you have to. Be quick about it.

Kate: Of course.

(*She leaves.*)

Lucentio: I don't believe it.

Hortensio: There goes fifty bucks.

Petruchio: You see, gentlemen, in order to have happiness and stability, you have to have clearly defined roles for the husband and wife. The husband is the master, and the wife must be submissive. This is clarity. Anything else is confusion. (*To the audience*) And feminism is a load of crap. And all feminist studies departments in universities are the worst crap of all.

Baptista: God bless you, Petruchio! You've worked a miracle. Kate is a changed woman. And she's obviously happy. So I'm going to add ten thousand dollars to her dowry.

Petruchio: Thank you. But I'm not finished. Let me show you just how obedient Kate is now.

(*Katherina returns with Bianca and the Widow.*) Kate, my dear, I really don't like that cap of yours. It looks terrible on you. Drop it on the floor and step on it.

(*Katherina removes her cap, drops it, and steps on it.*)

Widow: Oh, my goodness! I'd never allow myself to be ordered like that!

Bianca: Shame on you, Kate! That was so demeaning!

Lucentio: You should be that obedient. You cost me fifty dollars.

Bianca: Did you make a bet? Well, I'm glad you lost.

Petruchio: Kate, why don't you explain to these ladies what they owe to their husbands.

Widow: I don't need any lectures. I've been married before, you know.

Petruchio: Tell her (*Indicating the Widow*).

Kate: Madam, if you were married before, you ought to know better. But I guess your first husband was weak and let you step all over him. And now you're the worse for it. You're bad-tempered. And a bad temper destroys a woman's beauty. And a wife must always try to be beautiful to her husband. Your husband works hard to keep a roof over your head and keep you in fine clothes. And the very least he deserves is love and kindness. You should treat him like a prince—with complete loyalty—and obedience. A disobedient wife is like a traitor. Too many women think they're being modern by fighting with their husbands for equal power. I made that mistake, but I'm wiser now. Women don't rule. If they were meant to rule, they'd have the stronger bodies. So obey your husband—the way I obey mine.

Petruchio: What a wife! Give me a kiss!

(*Katherina gives Petruchio a kiss.*)

Lucentio: You win the bet. Congratulations.

Petruchio: Thank you. And now this happy husband and obedient wife will have their quality time—and so, good night.

(*Petruchio and Katherina leave.*)

Hortensio: He's an inspiration to all husbands everywhere.

Lucentio: I couldn't agree more.—Let's step outside for a smoke, shall we?

Hortensio: Yes, by all means.

(Lucentio and Hortensio leave. Then Dr. Kwambe Odopongo Bungalunga comes in to front stage and addresses the audience.)

Dr. Bungalunga: Hello, again. Dr. Kwambe Odopongo Bungalunga. I'm happy to report that the giant killer shrews in Alaska have been wiped out. But there is evidence that others may be lurking elsewhere—perhaps even in this area. Therefore, we urge that you show extreme caution on your way home from the theatre. Stay close together for protection. Be aware of your surroundings. Wherever you live, wherever you go—keep watching at all times. Keep watching—for killer shrews.

END

Posted on December 28, 2010 by Crad Kilodney, Toronto, Canada.

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